

Application No. 09/818,171  
Amendment dated February 21, 2006  
Reply to Office Action of November 2, 2005

Docket No. 1232-4692

### **REMARKS**

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application in view of the foregoing amendment and following remarks.

#### **Status of the Claims**

Claims 1, 10-12, 20-22 and 24-26 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 12 and 22 are independent. Claims 1, 10-12 and 20-22 stand rejected. Claims 24-26 are indicated as allowable if rewritten in an independent form.

By this amendment, the rejected claims (i.e., claims 1, 10-12, 20-22 and 24-26) are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Additionally, each of claims 24-26 is amended in an independent form. No new matter has been added by this amendment.

#### **Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102**

Claims 1, 10-12 and 20-22 have been repeatedly rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,640,619 to Takayama et al. ("Takayama").

While Applicant believes that the rejected claims are distinguishable over the cited reference, the rejected claims have been cancelled by this amendment to expedite the prosecution of this application thereby rendering the rejections directed to these claims moot.

#### **Objections**

Claims 24-26 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form.

As indicated above, each of claims 24-26 is amended in an independent form including all of the limitations of the base claims.

Applicant believes that the application as amended containing only allowable claims is in

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condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

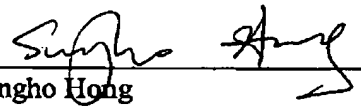
**AUTHORIZATION**

A petition for a one-month extension of time along with the associated fee is enclosed, extending the date for responding until March 2, 2006. Should an additional extension of time be required to render this paper timely filed, such extension is hereby petitioned and the Commissioner is authorized to charge any other fees necessitated by this Amendment, or credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 13-4500 (Order No. 1232-4692). A DUPLICATE COPY OF THIS SHEET IS ENCLOSED. An early and favorable examination on the merits is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,  
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Dated: February 21, 2006

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